



November 28, 2011

RE: **Rails-to-Trails Support**

My full name is David S. McCartney. I am the General Manager of Peninsula Fiber Network, LLC ("PFN"). PFN is headquartered in Marquette, Michigan. Today PFN provides nearly 800 miles of fiber based broadband telecommunications network in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. By the end of 2013, PFN expects to have an additional 800 miles of fiber in place in Upper Peninsula and Northern Lower Peninsula.

Through this network today, PFN is able to provide affordable high quality, reliable broadband services to Michigan's government entities, universities, hospitals, schools, emergency service agencies, businesses, cellular providers and Internet service providers. In fact, PFN is doing that today.

To ensure the reliability and quality of this and PFN's future network two things are important. One, the network must be fiber optic based. That is what PFN is investing in today. The second item is redundancy. The most efficient manner to accomplish this is through the building of backbone rings with the appropriate electronics. Therefore, if a failure occurs any where on a ring, there is a second path immediately available to the customer.

To build backbone rings, PFN needs to build at least two diverse fiber optic paths into all communities it plans to serve. Given the remoteness and the great distances between communities in Michigan's Upper Peninsula and Northern Lower Peninsula, this has made the design and construction of an affordable reliable network challenging and, in many cases, expensive. That said, PFN is committed to providing exactly that type of network so that PFN's customers have an increased availability of educational and economic opportunities.

The use of Rail-to-Trails system for deployment of fiber optics at affordable rates will assist PFN in reaching PFN goal of providing affordable reliable high quality broadband service and access to the Internet through out Michigan's Upper Peninsula and Northern Lower Peninsula.

Your committee has an opportunity to help Michigan's broadband providers realize cost savings and opportunities for expansion. This ultimately helps create an incentive to invest high tech dollars in Michigan and helps make broadband services more affordable and accessible. I urge you to vote in favor of SB499 and help improve the reliability, quality, and affordability of Michigan's broadband networks and ultimately the services these networks provide to the citizens of Michigan.

Respectfully

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "David S. McCartney", is written over the typed name.

David S. McCartney
General Manager